

THE GIRL AND THE GAME

A STORY OF MOUNTAIN RAILROAD LIFE

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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SYNOPSIS.

Little Helen Holmes, daughter of General Holmes, railroad man, is rescued from imminent danger on a scenic railroad by George Storm, a new boy. Grown to young womanhood, Helen saves Storm, now a fireman, her father, and his friends Amos Rhinelander, financier, and Robert Seagrue, promoter, from a threatened collision. Safetybreakers employed by Seagrue steal General Holmes' survey plans of the cut-off for the Tidewater. Fidelity would the general and escape. Her father's estate badly involved by his death, Helen goes to work on the Tidewater. Helen recovers the survey plans from Seagrue, and though they are taken from her, finds an accidentally made proof of the survey blueprint. Storm is employed by Rhinelander. Spike and his confederate safetybreakers steal Rhinelander's pay roll money. Helen pursues and, with a policeman's aid, captures two of them and recovers the money. Spike, befriended by Helen, in his turn saves her and the right-of-way contracts when Seagrue kidnaps her.

EIGHTH INSTALLMENT

THE RACE FOR RIGHT OF WAY

What to do with Spike after he had turned over his first leaf in the book of gratitude proved a difficulty for Helen. But it seemed to her the first thing to be attempted was to get him well away from Seagrue's influence. Seagrue, with the ample backing at his disposal, had established an elaborate construction camp well out on the desert, where he coupled with his railroad building enterprise as much of fraudulent deceit and force as he dare display toward Rhinelander and the men in the Copper Range & Tidewater construction work. The prize for which both roads were engaged in the tremendous effort of each to get ahead of the other was a substantial one, and Seagrue was never called to account at his headquarters for his strategy in the construction trenches.

On the morning that Helen took Spike down street to a Las Vegas clothing store, had him fitted out with new clothes and provided him with some pocket money, Seagrue was on his way over to his camp, accompanied by the two strong-arms, known by no more respectable names than Bill and Lug. He saw Helen on the street with Spike and watched the two for a moment. Dismissing Bill then to the garage for his motor car and bidding Lug, on his life, not to lose sight of Spike, Seagrue, himself, hastened to the office of the local sheriff.

Explaining to this official, already made complacent by generous offerings, that he had on his hands a contract laborer who was trying to jump his job, he engaged his promise of vigorous co-operation to bring Spike to time.

Seagrue led the way with him to the machine, which Bill had brought up, and, getting in with the sheriff, Bill drove toward the station. Helen had returned with Spike to the office, she had paid for a railroad ticket which was to carry him to the city, where, she believed, freed from Seagrue's contaminating influence, Spike would have a chance to get back on his feet.

Spike, in a comfortable frame of mind, was looking down at the ticket in his hand and reflecting what an extraordinary friend Helen had been, and how considerably she had treated him, when a quiet voice at his elbow spoke just two words into his ear: "Hello, Spike!"

Spike, who lived, as it were, at all times over a powder magazine of the unexpected, started a little as he turned to look into the composed gray eyes of Seagrue. He stood a moment bound by their spell.

Seagrue's face was lighted only by a pleasant smile. "Where you going, Spike?" he asked in friendly fashion. He looked about him with indecision, and as his eyes wandered he saw Seagrue beckoning to the sheriff to come over from the machine.

Seagrue, meantime, put his hand in his pocket. From it he drew a worn little pamphlet, and affecting careful deliberation, held it in his hand before Spike's wondering eyes. In the black-faced type on the cover a name and description were printed, but what Spike saw staring at him were the figures and the words: "\$500.00 REWARD!"

But to Spike that one line of type meant infinitely more than it could mean to any other man.

Seagrue watched closely the changing expressions on the hunted criminal's face; he was even quiet and pleasant in his demeanor as he muttered: "You shouldn't try to leave me, Spike. At least, not until I say you may go."

"Seagrue," Spike almost hissed, "I can send you to the chair; man—do you know that?"

Seagrue lost none of his composure. He returned Spike's angry look undisturbed. "Do you know what will happen when you do?" he asked in even tones. "After that 100,000 out of it,

they'll lift you in for the next shock, Spike. When you're ready to commit suicide, I'm ready to go to the straps ahead of you or after you—that's as the sheriff may prefer. But until that moment comes, Spike—a threatening intonation made itself felt within the studied utterance—"until that moment, Spike, you will take your orders from me—understand?"

Spike looked gloomily down at the ticket he held in his hand. He realized he was utterly helpless. "All right," he said gruffly.

Seagrue shook hands with the sheriff as he followed Spike across the platform. "I don't think I'll have any more trouble with him," he said in an undertone. "Thank you just the same, sheriff."

With the rival construction crews, matters were reaching a somewhat critical stage in their race. Both the Colorado & Coast and the Copper Range & Tidewater companies had reached the limits of the city of Las Vegas, where, owing to the topography of the country as well as to the difficulties of getting through the town, possible rights of way were exceedingly scarce. A section almost immediately in front now of both construction gangs was occupied by a



Helen Understood the Necessity for Prompt Action.

weather-beaten pioneer who bore the name of Cassidy, and his comfortable cottage obstructed both surveys.

The advent of two railroads building neck and neck across the desert through the little town had naturally stirred every inhabitant of it to a high pitch of excitement. Small wonder that Cassidy's head had become in some degree confused as to values, and by the time Rhinelander got around to see the bronzed pioneer with a check for two thousand dollars—the price first put upon the property by its veteran owner—valuations had risen and Cassidy declared that he would sell for ten thousand dollars and not a cent less.

Rhinelander, considerably taken aback, impatiently assented to the exorbitant sum named, and going inside the cottage, wrote out his check for it. In exchange he received Cassidy's rather uncertain signature, on the customary legal form, granting to the Copper Range & Tidewater Railway company privileges over the Cassidy land as a freehold owner.

Seagrue, arriving from town, learned from his foreman of the status of the insignificant plot of ground, adverse possession of which might frustrate their persistent plans for obstructing Rhinelander. With his survivors Seagrue hurried to the end of the work, and reached the ground just in time to encounter Rhinelander coming out of Cassidy's house and the agreement duly signed and delivered in his hand. And behind Rhinelander came George Storm ready to bring the men up to take possession of the Cassidy domain.

Seagrue and his followers halted then and Rhinelander, feeling the victory all his own, explained the situation to Seagrue, while Storm, amiably, but firmly, ordered Seagrue's men to get off the Copper Range property.

Seagrue, without saying anything to controvert what he had heard, walked straight into Cassidy's house. "I'm sorry to be a little late, Cassidy," he began, bluntly. "You know we want your property. And we're prepared to pay you a reasonable price for it—not an extravagant price," declared Seagrue, impressively, "nothing of that kind, but—" he asked, buttonholing the old man with friendly emphasis, "just what is right and fair. I don't know what you consider your property worth," he continued, talking so fast the old man could not get a word in edgewise, "but I have written out a check here for fifteen thousand dol-

lars. And if you will give me your signature to this right of way contract the check, old boy, is yours."

"But—" spluttered Cassidy, with difficulty, "I've sold this place this minute, Mr. Seagrue, to this man Rhinelander here for ten thousand dollars."

"Do you mean to say," demanded Seagrue, impressively, "that you don't consider your property worth fifteen thousand dollars?"

"Sure, I do," agreed Mike, his eyes blinking with astonishment.

"Then," exclaimed Seagrue, solemnly, "this man has fraudulently imposed on you."

Cassidy, bewildered, looked to his friendly adviser for a suggestion. "Phew! the devil 'm I to do?"

"Do!" thundered Seagrue, seeing now that he had his victim coming. "Tear up your fraudulent contract here and now and sign an honest one."

The sturdy pioneer, with a show of indignation, tore up his copy of Rhinelander's contract, signed a more equitable one for the obliging Seagrue and put another and untainted check for fifteen thousand dollars into his pocket.

Seagrue beckoned to his posse of men and, headed by Cassidy, they told Rhinelander and his companions to get off the premises before they were put off.

Rhinelander, familiar with the bullying tactics of his enemies, saw the situation he faced. But he stood his ground before Seagrue and Cassidy, listening patiently to what the victimized old man had to say, but absolutely firm in his resolve to stand on his rights.

"My right of way is legal," he said to both men. "And I'll bring the law here right now to enforce it."

Hastening to the telegraph office inside one of his outfit cars, he telegraphed to Helen:

Seagrue is using force to protest my right of way. Have attorney meet me at the depot at 11 o'clock. Arrange for a special to bring deputies up here, RHINELANDER.

The move was not lost on Seagrue. When he saw Rhinelander board the car containing the telegraph outfit, he summoned his own operator and dispatched him to a spot between Rhinelander's car and the main line with instructions to "tap in" and take whatever messages passed. Rhinelander thus sat in his own car watching the operator tick off his message to Helen, and her reply came promptly:

Attorney will meet you on arrival. Special will be ready to leave any time after eleven. HELEN.

But Seagrue's operator industriously copied both message and answer and turned them in to his employer.

Storm, in the meantime, was making the most of his opportunity, and with his men on Cassidy's place was preparing to push possession as far as possible.

"Run the steel cables around the house, George, and we will swing it in later."

After giving this order, Rhinelander had hastened to the station to meet the local train when it came in. So swift, however, had been Seagrue's dispositions that his redoubtable scouts, Bill and Lug, were already at the station with instructions from Seagrue to delay the special until daylight; by which time he reckoned he could make his possession secure on the Cassidy place.

These worthies had already reached the special and boarded it. On the platform, Rhinelander met Helen and the attorney she had summoned, and with him, Rhinelander hastened uptown to get armed deputies—Bill and Lug now trailing behind to keep track of every move.

At Cassidy's, Storm was urging his men to speed on with their track laying. Seagrue's gang was almost abreast of them and setting a pace, too, that it was difficult to cope with—Seagrue, himself, directing the operations. The house, so long the peaceful abode of old man Cassidy, now became the very storm center of an extraordinary disturbance. Seagrue racked his brain for an idea that would hamper the advance of Storm and his energetic crew. And when the inspiration struck him, he put it instantly into effect.

"They're beating us," he said to his foreman; "that's flat. But I can stop them. Bring up the wrecker."

The word was passed and the ponderous wrecking car, its huge crane thrust threateningly forward, was pushed alongside Cassidy's house and surrounded by a swarming gang of men. Seagrue's order to throw out the whips was instantly executed and almost within a minute, it seemed, after the huge machine had been brought into play the house was enveloped in a network of steel. There was a sharp word of command; a rattle of pistons; the old house quivered for an instant in the grip of the mysterious monster—then it rose like a mad acrobat from its foundations; hung and swung a moment doubtfully in the air, pitched headlong toward the other end of the lot and settled with a heavy bang down to earth exactly in the path of Storm and his periphring men.

Rhinelander, the moment he secured the deputies, hastened back to the station and boarded the special train. A large engine coupled to one coach, stood in waiting, and as they pulled out, Helen wished him good luck.

Unfortunately, Seagrue's two worthies, Bill and Lug, misbehaved themselves, hid on the head end of the coach, and as soon as the town was left behind, the two climbed over the tender and held up the fireman and engineer. The engine crew, taken thus unawares, could offer no resistance whatever and the two were forced over the tender to the head end of the coach.

ROYAL Theatre

Continuous from 1 to 10.

Tuesday April 4th

CHAPTER VIII.

—OF—

"The Girl and the Game"

Featuring

Fearless

Helen Holmes

AND

The Famous Triangle Keystone Comedy

FICKLE FATTY'S FALL

Featuring

FATTY ARBUCKLE

Coming Monday

APRIL 3rd

The Famous Triangle Fine

Arts Drama

"OLD HIEDELBERG"

Featuring Dorothy Gish &

Wallace Reid.

Cutting off the engine as soon as they had accomplished this, Seagrue's men pulled away with the stolen locomotive and left the coach just where it abruptly stopped when the air went on, with the intention of putting as many miles as possible between the coachload of deputies and Rhinelander's chances for defending the right of way.

The conductor of the marooned coach did not lose a moment in getting into action. An emergency telephone was snatched from its bracket, connected up with the main line wires and the conductor called up Helen in the office at Las Vegas. In a few words he told her what had happened, and while Rhinelander and the deputies listened around him, he asked what she could do to help them out of their predicament.

Helen understood the necessity for prompt action. But how, she asked herself as she looked anxiously from the office window up and down the yards, to help them quickly? Her eye lighted on the little roundhouse away down at the lower end of the yard.

Resting within the friendly shade of its north wall she espied the crazy old yard switch engine, known reverently among the switchmen as "Soda Water Sal." Soda Water Sal took her disreputable nickname from the fact of her misfortune in being crushed white a good part of the time with alkali.

The excited girl dashed at the top of her speed down the platform and across the yard to rouse the crew and get them to carry her to Rhinelander. But though Soda Water Sal stood as peaceful as an old Dobbin munching her noonday repast, the switching crew was nowhere to be found. Beyond a doubt, Helen felt, they were all down town, eating their dinners, and to find them quickly was out of the question. She called out a few times, hardly hoping for a response, and none met her ears. There was steam up, and without loss of time Helen climbed into the cab, and, opening the throttle, gave Sal steam. A venerable mare, struck, in the midst of her lunch, with a whip, could not have been more startled than the old engine at Helen's summons. Soda Water Sal started and trembled. Helen touched her heels again.

No such sight as this was ever before seen on the main line of the Copper Range & Tidewater. If Soda Water Sal had been dancing a two-step on the rails, she could not have plunged and cavorted more wildly than she did as Helen, pushing her to a pace undreamed of in her long and peaceful yard career, achieved a miracle of speed with her.

Up the line, Rhinelander, the deputies, the train crew and the engineer and fireman of the stolen engine surrounding the marooned coach, searched the horizon vainly for a sign of assistance. The conductor, the moment after he had raised Helen on the wire and told of their plight, out between stations on the main line, had not been able to get another word from Las Vegas office. In his impatience and excitement, Rhinelander had taken over the telephone and used his best endeavors to make himself heard by Helen. The suspicion came to him that Seagrue, with some unsuspected devilry, had succeeded in cutting off even wire communication from the helpless rescue party. But as he dropped the receiver in despair, a shout arose among the deputies, and, looking down the far perspective of the long tangent that separated them from Las Vegas, Rhinelander's men saw a faint line of smoke on the horizon. It grew rapidly more distinct and spread blacker and heavier. An engine was bearing down on them. The railroad men were non-plused. None of them could recognize in the distance the shambling gait of

the queer flyer, and Soda Water Sal was well upon them before they realized it was she. None the less hearty, however, was her welcome, and when the expectant throng made out Helen's face at the cab window a chorus of shouts went up to greet her.

With her hair in the wind and her eyes burning with excitement, the white-faced girl brought the astonished old machine to a stop close to the coach. Rhinelander and the conductor ran to greet her. Few words were needed in explanation, few were lost. Coupling the coach ahead of the switch engine and hustling the deputies aboard, the conductor from the rear platform gave Helen her signal. Helen opened the throttle again and away went Soda Water Sal, pushing the loaded coach up the line ahead. To Soda Water Sal a coach was a mere toy—a plaything; indeed, she felt as if she were only now coming into her own when she had something in her hands to push. And without showing the slightest appearance of strain, Soda Water Sal ate up the miles ahead of her like city blocks and got within sight of Seagrue's two stalwart tools, who were trying to run away with the engine of the special. Indeed, the pair in the stolen cab felt quite secure in their quick getaway until Bill, acting as driver, looking back, saw a train behind and an ominous cloud of smoke pouring from the stack of Soda Water Sal—the conductor was firing for Helen and he understood his job.

In spite of everything the two outlaws could do, Helen closed up the gap that separated the coach from them, and on the front end of the latter the fleeing rascals could make out the armed deputies. Had there been any doubt in their minds as to the temper of the men pursuing them, little puffs of white smoke rising from the coach front, and the whine of rifle bullets about their ears would have convinced Lug and Bill of the danger threatening them. Safety first was a household word with the two. Nothing of the disposition of martyrs had place in their make-up, and, abandoning the engine, Lug, with a word to Bill to ease the pace, descended the steps of the tender and tumbled down a soft bank to the right of way; his companion followed; a few minutes later Soda Water Sal, rounding the curve behind, shot past them with her reeling coach.

Overtaking the abandoned engine on a grade, a few miles ahead, the coach was again coupled to it by the Rhinelander party, and when the queer-looking combination reached the first passing track, the engine of the special, almost dead, was vigorously kicked by Soda Water Sal, together with the car, out into the clear. And Helen, with the more venturesome of her legal lights clinging to the footboard and running boards of Soda Water Sal and others swarming in her tender and crowding the cab, again rushed the posse on to the scene of the trouble.

At the camp Rhinelander's forces were in trouble. Seagrue's strategy had completely blocked them—everybody was stumped by Seagrue's audacity. And while the leaders were trying to pull themselves together, Seagrue's men were rapidly extending their possession of the disputed ground.

Storm, realizing that at any cost the situation must somehow be recouped, ran over to where Wood was watching the enemy and whispered to him. Whatever the proposal, the old man was startled when George Storm made it.

Wood looked toward the camp dubiously. "I don't know," he said finally. "That's pretty radical medicine. But Rhinelander isn't here and I suppose we've got to do something. It's a cinch they've got us beat out of three months' time in another hour, for if they once get hold of this section, we've got to drag them into court. If you think the old man will stand for it, George, slam away. You know as well as I do. But I can't take the responsibility."

"I will," cried Storm emphatically. He turned to the foreman of their switching crew, who stood near, and pointed to the engine puffing at some little distance. "Couple on to that outfit car, Carty, as quick as the Lord will let you, and get ready for a run."

Carty hurried down the track. Storm, giving orders right and left, asked Wood to send a crew of men

into the blazing sunshine convinced Seagrue that something was up. Rhinelander's laborers and track layers under Storm's directions parted and stood expectant at each side of the run of track on which Cassidy's house had been so unceremoniously dropped. Seagrue saw, too late, what Storm's radical move in the fight meant.

Storm, scent of battle in his nostrils, stood on the footboard as the sturdy switch engine started. On it came, accelerating fast from one, two, ten, twenty miles an hour up to thirty. With the safety valve popping and smoke streaming in a cloud from the



Climbed into the Cab and Opened the Throttle.

stack, the engine with Rhinelander's movable hotel in front of it, bore down on Cassidy's house. Cassidy, himself, sunning on a pile of Seagrue's ties, with his pipe in his mouth and his two checks in his pocket, little suspected what was coming. But Rhinelander's men saw and understood it all. A mighty yell rose from the footboard as the engine and car sped on. Storm, bareheaded, his black hair streaming in the sun—clinging with one hand for safety as he came from the end of the footboard and stretched his left arm far out as a semaphore—signaled the charge.

The engineer checked heavily. A stream of fire ground from the driving wheels; the engine jumped in the grip of the brakes and the outfit car, released, headed like a catapult straight at Cassidy's house. Men jumped back as it hurtled past. The next instant, crashing and smashing ahead, it took completely through Cassidy's house. A great cloud of dust and timbers rose as from an explosion and the next moment what had been a house lay torn into a thousand pieces along the right of way.

Like a spent cannon ball the outfit car drove on; men, amazed, watching its wild flight. It struck the end of the rails, hung for a moment poised, trembled and toppled headlong from the embankment into a borrow pit.

Storm sprang from the foot-board of the engine, and before the dust of the crash had settled, called his men forward. Rhinelander's gang responded with fresh hope and energy. Seagrue saw with wrath how completely he had been outplayed. He called his men together to rush the Copper Range forces for possession of the Cassidy yard. They ran forward with picks and shovels, and it looked to Storm as if blood might be shed in spite of everything, when the loud shrill whistle of Soda Water Sal was heard down the line, and within a few moments Helen brought the old engine to a stop at the end of the steel.

The deputies, followed by Rhinelander and his attorney, poured out of the gangway. Storm met his boss. Just what view Amos would take of the summary measures he had adopted to clear their right of way the young man felt now a little uncertain about. Rhinelander looked ahead for the familiar landmark which he had just acquired at the rather extravagant price of ten thousand dollars and asked where the Cassidy house was. "Ah! gah! 't hell," interposed Cassidy (who stood listening), pathetically.

Storm pointed to the wreckage littering the right of way and told the story of what had been done by Seagrue and how his play had been defeated. Rhinelander's face lighted with enthusiasm and Helen's eyes danced with sheer joy. Seagrue, disgruntled and beaten, had seated himself on his own right of way on the pile of ties vacated in excitement by Cassidy. In another hour Rhinelander's men had made their title to the disputed property good.

Cassidy, bewildered by the extraordinary turn things had taken, started to walk back to where Seagrue was, but on reflection, he changed his mind and, lighting his pipe, sat quietly down on a part of the roof that had for many years given him a vantage point, to view the vicissitudes so swiftly taken on his former home. He had less than Seagrue had to worry about. With both checks in his pocket, he felt sure he must realize on at least one, and he sat on the scene long after the men had quit work, thoughtfully smoking his pipe and reflecting on the queer things that may happen in a real railroad war.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"They're Beating Us, but I Can Stop Them!"

to throw everything movable in the outfit car out on the sand. Seagrue, watching from a distance the sudden activity among Rhinelander's forces, watched the new developments with much curiosity and some little anxiety. He saw the switch engine speed down the line, couple to the outfit car and back away with it for a dash. In the cab all was excitement. Under Storm's orders, preparations were being made for a record dash, and as the engine stopped with the outfit car in front of it down below the second switch, huge volumes of smoke pouring from the stack.

With her hair in the wind and her eyes burning with excitement, the white-faced girl brought the astonished old machine to a stop close to the coach. Rhinelander and the conductor ran to greet her. Few words were needed in explanation, few were lost. Coupling the coach ahead of the switch engine and hustling the dep-